

# APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

## 2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** City Year, Inc

**Application ID:** 15ES168121

**Program Name:** City Year Dallas – FPG

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing summary feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one Reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

### Reviewers' Summary Comments

**Strengths:**

The AmeriCorps members will gain new skills and marketable experiences in the educational and business sectors. Throughout the journey, the member will have formal and informal feedback, leadership experiences, and networking opportunities.

The applicant renders current data to support the need of providing academic support to at risk students in the target population.

The applicant compares district data from the three indicators (attendance, reading, and math) to the target communities to substantiate a need for the program.

The interventions outline in the program design are logical, research based, and attainable.

The tiered Response To Intervention (RTI) and Check-In/ Check-Out interventions addresses attendance, academics and behavior and tailored to diverse need of each student.

Applicant shows relevant data of academic need including STAAR math and reading rates for each Spruce and Roosevelt High Schools. Data shows that both schools have students with a significant population who are performing unsatisfactorily on their math and reading (Spruce Math: 39% Reading: 44%, Roosevelt Math: 36% Reading 40%).

Applicant shows a 7% discrepancy in at-risk graduation rates of students in the Dallas Independent School District when compared to at-risk students across Texas.

Applicant identifies Whole School Whole Child Services (WSWC) Model and Response To Intervention as models proposed to increase academic achievement, which are evidence based programs and consistent with increased academic achievement.

Applicant's logic model articulates a flowing linear approach to the program design, providing quantifiable inputs, outputs and outcomes such as improvement in math, English and attendance.

Applicant thoroughly describes multiple training opportunities and identifies a 36 week learning calendar as a plan to provide member professional development.

Applicant identifies a Basic Training Academy (BTA) which includes (operations, basic disaster preparedness and response, community asset mapping, and state of education in America) and also identifies a two day a month and a mid-year Advanced Training Academy that covers intermediate and advanced skills around effective tutoring strategies, lesson design, working with teachers, communication, and post-service planning.

Applicant identifies an Observation and Coaching Program to provide real-time feedback and coaching to Members on service delivery. Applicant also identifies an online performance management system to track service delivery.

Applicant identifies multiple training opportunities for Member Supervisors including Summer Academy and Leadership Conferences.

Applicant thoroughly describes how Members will participate in the "Our Idealist's Journey" curriculum as a source of reflection during service.

Applicant identifies the Leadership After City Year program as a support system for Members after their service, providing career planning and engagement in the education and national service fields.

A tremendous strength is the way applicant used three different elements to demonstrate the need for the program in Dallas Independent School District. First, it used respected research to identify risk factors for school failure and dropouts. Next, it used statistical data to show that all those factors were disproportionately present in the school district. Finally, applicant used local school data to demonstrate the district's inability to provide the needed intervention. Much of the data used is of very recent vintage, including student performance reports as recent as April 2014.

There is intricate detail on the training, learning opportunities, and day-to-day activities that Members will experience. For example, each member will work with a focus group of eight to ten students, providing tutoring, homework assistance, general peer support, and parent contact where appropriate.

The way applicant addresses the particular skills Members will develop is especially cogent. It persuasively outlines the effectiveness of two different types of training Members will receive. There is the 36-week sequential service skills training program, as well as the 10-month leadership development training program.

This applicant uses its experience in other geographic areas to demonstrate program standardization in compelling way. That includes identifying unrelated organizations that disproportionately accept this applicant's program graduates. One such unrelated organization is Teach For America, which the applicant identifies to support its statement that program Members will acquire and improve marketable skills.

Applicant sufficiently addresses plans for supervisory support. Supervisors, known as Impact Managers, will be based on-site, with various specified daily, weekly and monthly interactions.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant cited four criteria for students at-risk however only data for three of the components were listed in the program design.

The applicant states prohibited activities will be reviewed prior to the start of service, however; it is unclear if the training / Professional Development will occur throughout the year.

Applicant does not thoroughly describe the whole class support and tutoring interventions that will be provided during first and second periods (block a/b schedule) and how they will interact and coordinate with daily lesson plans.

Applicant does not thoroughly describe how supervisors will be trained to follow AmeriCorps regulations and priorities.

Applicant doesn't thoroughly provide an explanation of how prohibited activities will be reviewed other than a review on registration day and during BTA sessions. Earlier in the section prohibited activities are not a described topic in the BTA sessions.

Applicant does not identify member skills resulting from the program.

Applicant does not articulate how Members will be recruited from the community they serve.

The applicant does not clearly describe how peer-to-peer contact will meaningfully reduce school dropout rates.

The applicant does not provide a detailed or well-reasoned local recruitment plan. It is unclear how this applicant will recruit Members from the communities served.